the issue and examine the feasibility of setting up of Mauda power project using coal from Ib valley and discuss with the beneficiary states, which would be willing to buy power at the rate at which this project will be able to offer.

In the process, NTPC has initiated action for preparation of Feasibility Report (FR) of the project based on Ib-Valley coal to establish its techno-economic viability. After the FR is prepared, NTPC would approach the beneficiaries to seek their consent to buy power from this project. Ministry of Power has also requested Ministry of Coal to provide coal linkage from a nearby coal mines.

Drug abuse in North-East

*17. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a report of the United Nations released recently, has said that drug abuse in North-Eastern India, especially among the youth is a cause for worry;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken to prevent drug abuse in North-East?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The report indicates that since the 1970s, the pattern of drug use amongst local youth in North-Eastern States has changed from age old tradition of cannabis and opium use to heroin smoking, followed by injecting heroin and that many young males and females being drug use by directly injecting as opposed to the traditional route which involved non-injecting. Gradually emphasis is shifting from heroin to synthetic drugs like dextropropxyphene taken through injections.

(c) The Ministry is implementing the Scheme for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse wherein non-governmental organisations are provided financial support for awareness programmes, counseling, treatment after care and rehabilitation services in varied settings such as the community, workplace, educational institutions, prisons, etc. Presently, 46 de-addiction centres and 8 counseling centres are functioning in the North East for this purpose.